



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

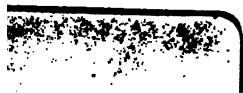
About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

RESEARCH LIBRARIES



33 07490116 0

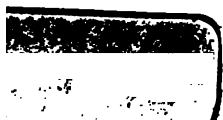


2015

"all"

Housman

N. C. L.



2015

"2021

HOUSMAN

NOV 11

1. History of the U.S.

THE LITTLE LAND

PUBLISHER'S ANNOUNCEMENT :

SPIKENARD : *A Book of Devotional Love Poems, by Laurence Housman, with cover designed by the Author. Small 4to, boards. 3s. 6d. net.*

**THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY**

**ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS**

R

L



THE LITTLE LAND

WITH SONGS FROM
ITS FOUR RIVERS

7

BY

LAURENCE
^{o.c.}
HOUSMAN
T

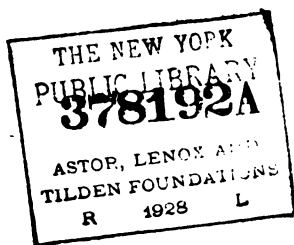
NEW YORK
PUBLIC
LIBRARY

LONDON

GRANT RICHARDS

1899

N113



ROY WAIN
1928
1928

CHISWICK PRESS:—CHARLES WHITTINGHAM AND CO.
100, COURT CHANCERY LANE, LONDON.

TO
HERBERT ALEXANDER
IN FRIENDSHIP



CONTENTS.

I.

	PAGE
THE GOD AT PLAY	3
BLOOD IN AUTUMN	6
PUSS IN WINTER	7
THE APPLE OF WINTER	10
THE ELFIN BRIDE	12
THE MAGIC WOOD	14
UNDERGROWTH	17
ST. PETER'S FISH	19
THE DEATH OF ST. CHRISTOPHER	21
THE CITY OF SLEEP	23

II.

AS THE FLOCKS FOR THE BROOKS	29
OF LOVE AS A MIRROR	31
OF SELF-LOVE	32
OF HOLY OBEDIENCE	33
HOW LOVE PUTS OUT LOVE'S DREAM	34
OF A CAUSE THAT IS PAST PLEADING	35
THE BODY'S COMPLAINT OF ITS BURDEN	36
THE SOUL'S COMPLAINT OF LOVE'S ABSENCE	37
OF GRIEF WASTED	38
OF TIME LOST	39
TO LOVE, THE DESTROYER	40
OF LOVE'S FREEHOLD	41

	PAGE
THE LOVER TO THE BELOVED	42
HOW THE LOVER IS WITHOUT WILL	43
POWERS OF AIR	45
HOW LOVE CANNOT RELEASE THE LOVER	47
HOW A LITTLE JOY ENDED A GREAT SORROW	48
THE DREAM	51
THE ARROW AND THE BOW	53
A PRAYER IN AUTUMN	55
A PRAYER AGAINST SPRING	56
LOVE DEAD AND RAISED	57
THE NAMING OF LOVE	58

III.

CUPID AND CHRIST	61
CHRIST AND DEATH	63
THE NEW ORPHEUS	64
SAINT AND SINNER	70
BONDS	72
LITTLE DEATH	74

IV.

THE LAST LAUGH	77
THE RETURN OF THE NATIVE	79
THE RETURN OF THE BELOVED	81
HIC JACET	82
THE RED FIELD	83
THE MAN IN POSSESSION	85
A GARDEN ENCLOSED	87
THE OPEN GRAVE	89
ADVOCATUS DIABOLI	91
A PRAYER TO DEATH	95

I.

B

THE LITTLE LAND.

THE GOD AT PLAY.

(On a child playing by the water.)

IN the hollow of his hand
My child holds a little land :
Lord of all that land is he !
There are hills and meadows green,
There a river meets the sea ;
And between,
On a rock an island town
Takes its stand,
Looking down
Over all the pleasant lea.
And its ramparts are the band
Of a crown,
Steeple-crested, gemmed and grand,
Lording all that little land,
So fair to see
In my child's hand !

Out to sea the fighting fleets,—
 Round the walls the fighting men
 Bannered go.

Faint from inland fold and pen
 White flock bleats

And cattle low :
 Autumn hoards, and summer heaps,
 Ploughman ploughs, and reaper reaps,
 Over sluggard winter leaps

Light-foot spring ;
 Peace is priest, and Plenty, king :

Since a kind god wills it so,—
 So to be from long ago,

In this lazy little land,

So fair to see
 In my child's hand !

Little land is all asleep,

Resting at the sabbath-bell :

High upon its rocky perch,
 Grounded deep,

Goes the gadding town to church:—

Goes to pray in pious speech,

Goes to let the preacher preach :

And as there folk sit and nod,

All the while a tired god

Lets the river rise and rise,
 Sets the shoreward tide to flow

Up the land in soft surprise :
Ah, heigho !
How the happy sheepfolds go,
How the farms like islands show !
How of all the little land
Nothing soon is left to stand
Save the town, a place of woe,—
Spired crown and rampart-band—
This,—of all the little land
So fair to see
In my child's hand !

BLOOD IN AUTUMN.

THE heart of the year lies smitten
 And heaves its burden by ;
 And over the grass the kitten
 Sets withered leaves to fly :
 Tattered, and torn, and bitten,
 They still refuse to die.

The wind of life is in them,
 It follows their feeble flight ;
 The kitten can never thin them
 Though prettily shows her spite,
 That lets them free to spin them
 New lives for her delight.

O kitten, O little kitten,
 Play on and do your best !
 Wherever the frost has bitten
 Is blood upon autumn's breast ;
 The heart of the year lies smitten
 But cannot turn to rest !

PUSS IN WINTER.

WITH a pit-pat
That one hardly hears,
The snow-white cat,
From the hill where she sat,
Comes over the moor
And rubs at the door
And purrs.

Puss, puss,
From your velvet feet
You have shaken your shoes,
And your fur flies loose :
Wherever you moult
Comes a winding sheet
On the holt.

Paws, paws,
Heavy with down,
Your icicle claws
Have caught hold of the town :
You are holding its breath !
You are holding it down
Like death !

Slow, slow,
You creep to the chinks :
No breath can go
Through door or shutter :
No sound you utter ;—
You watch like a lynx
Its foe.

Mute, mute,
At the myriad tread
Of your white foot
The town stays dead :
Over each sill
Goes the soft white frill
Of your head.

Mouse, mouse,
The claws say “ come !
Come out of the house ! ”
But the door stays dumb :
And the house-mouse bides
With his heart in his sides
Grown numb.

Cat, cat,
The little mouse pries :
He waits and sighs
For the sorrow to part :—

For the "pit-pat"
(He is waiting for that!)
The "pit-pat"
Of your melting heart!

Pause, pause,
Till a sound of pity
From the cat's heart flows
Through the leaguered city:
Till the cold heart thaws
On its cushion of snows;
And back she draws
(While the little mouse peeps)
Her icicle claws,
And sleeps.

THE APPLE OF WINTER.

APPLE and leaf have left the bough ;
 The robin is the apple now.
 There peeps between his winter coat,
 The red round apple of his throat ;
 You see how red it is, and strong,
 Because it is so ripe with song.

And all the while its ripeness drops,
 He sings and sings and never stops ;
 Though all the rest stays russet-brown,
 His breast keeps moving up and down :
 And oh, so red, and oh, so ripe
 Are all the tunes he has to pipe !

What inward ripeness that must be !
 Its single song loads all the tree ;
 As if a thousand apples were
 Pushing their sweetness out in air.
 I wonder if the sleeping root
 Knows what a load it bears of fruit ?

The side of him that's next the sun
Shows ripe, but never overdone :
So short a day, such little heat
Are just enough to keep him sweet ;
And when to quit the tree he tries,
He never falls, he only flies.

Oh, if the apples leaved in gold
Had only such a song to hold,
With fruity voices to the air
Telling the world when ripe they were :
How good to have their songs for guides
Come beating from their ripened sides !

Then we should hear them cry, "Be quick !
We're ripe to-day, and right to pick !"
And piping through the orchard town—
"My cheeks are red, my pips are brown !"
Straight they would tumble at our feet :
And we would pick them up and eat.

Apple and leaf have left the bough ;
The robin is the apple now.
He is the apple of my eye ;
But when he leaves the tree to fly,
I wonder if the sleeping root
Knows it has lost its load of fruit ?

THE ELFIN BRIDE.

A CROSS the land, along the waste
 That lies before the town,
 A long procession, laggard-paced,
 Of woods came marching down.
 "A far way off we see she comes!" the happy people cried;
 And up within the steeple, how the bells rang for the Bride!

"She's clothed in white, she wears a ring;
 And oh, she shines like gold!
 So red and gold and white a thing
 Did any before behold?"
 To kiss her feet the flood grew still, and every gate flew
 wide,
 And all the bells ran ringing down the hill to meet the
 Bride!

Amid the scarlet of her lips
 The laughter buds and brims;
 And up the hill, as up she trips,
 The royal river swims.
 Her hair's a golden lattice blown out at either side,
 And back the bells come ringing up the hill to bring the
 Bride.

The king within his palace
 Leaped up from off his throne,
 And her lips were like a chalice
 When he set them to his own.

“And you, my Love beloved,” he cried, but at the word
 grew dumb.

“Have come, Beloved !” the bells replied, “Have come,
 have come, have come !”

She turned about, she beckoned back
 The wild-woods with her eyes ;
 The trees stood still upon the track,
 The river ceased to rise.

“Go back,” she said, “dear kinsmen, and range away at
 will !”

And water-flood and wild-wood went thundering down the
 hill.

Up over roof and rafter
 She heard the iron birds
 Tongue out, and fell from laughter
 To little lisping words :

“And I, my Love, beloved,” she cried, and then joy held
 her dumb,

“Have come, Beloved !” the bells replied, “Have come,
 have come, have come.”

THE MAGIC WOOD.

I CAME to the edge of the magic wood :
 My footfall stopped, and my pulses dropped ;
 And oh, with a will
 My heart stayed still !
 And under my brain, that the low boughs topped,
 A bubble broke,
 And a wonder woke
 And I came to myself, and I understood.

A long bough leaned across and dropped
 An acorn down, and the acorn split :
 And out, and forth, there chirped and hopped
 A twig,—green spring in the sprigs of it,
 And wing-like leaves to flit and go
 Wherever the wind had wit to blow.

Then one more down, and a thousand fell :
 And off pell-mell through the woodland brown
 They broke like folk through a market-town,
 Where thickens and quickens
 The crowd, and—“ Chickens ! ”—
 The cry is, “ Spring chickens, spring chickens to sell ! ”

For one was plump, and thickly plumed ;
 And one was crested, and combed and groomed ;
 And one was long in the legs and spurred :
 And one was a very broth of a bird.
 And one,—so soon as I looked thereat
 My heart cried pat,
 “ But I must have that ! ”

So off I set, at chivvy and chase,
 Ah me ! my legs, 'twas a corkscrew race :
 For the chick was quick,—had spirit and pace,
 And its spirit was high, and its pace was good ;
 And first to left, then round to right,
 And now on foot, but again in flight,
 It had almost flown
 On a way of its own,
 When it passed the pale of the magic wood—
 And there fell flat !

Its footfall stopped, and its pulses dropt,
 And oh, with a will,
 Where it lay so still,
 I covered it up with my hat.

After a bit, when I lifted it—
 One small corner—
 Peeping thereunder,
 Grief and wonder left me a mourner :

Nothing was there, but a withered leaf!
Now I ask of me, who was the thief?

I lay on the edge of the magic wood :
And under my brain that a low bough topped
Conscience awoke, and the wonder broke,
And I came to myself, and I understood.

UNDERGROWTH.

OH, Earth, whose wings are full of eyes,
 The waiting eyes of bird and beast,
 All questioning of man more wise,—
 Of man! who understands the least,
 Down looking through their dumb surmise,
 How came *his* light to be increased?—

Beneath the shadow of thy wings,
 Would I might bring my brain to rest;
 And come thereby on stealthier springs
 Of insect-wisdom, working best
 Free from this outward sight of things,
 These troubled glimpses of our quest:

Or, out of reach of grief or mirth,
 Below the sense of light or sound,
 Where—rooted lovers of the earth,
 And nearer nestlings of the ground
 Than bird or beast—sealed looks man least
 May look into, soft eyes lie bound.

The garden eyes, the woodland eyes,
 Green-cradled, dewy-fresh from birth,
 At sight whereof an old surmise
 Questions what view they take of earth ;
 And a familiar pain replies,—
 Nay, what can such blind looks be worth ?

Their looks are wild, their looks are tame ;
 Yet, upward looking all they can,
 The deep division is the same
 'Twixt their young eyes and man.

This startled gaze, this gaze of trust,
 Of eyes that are both wild and tame !
 That in their bondage have no shame,
 Nor grief if from the garden thrust :—
 As knowing how once a Gardener came
 And set their feet to dust.

They watch, with eyes from some far dawn,
 By some far onward dawn sufficed ;
 Remembering through the night long-drawn
 Across a twilight faintly spiced,
 How once, where whisp'ring shade enticed,
 And danced upon a dappled lawn,
 Deep in their woods a startled faun
 Held gaze upon the sleeping Christ.

ST. PETER'S FISH.

FOUR fishes swam on St. Peter's tower,
 Against the wind through shine and shower,
 Four were they, and they swam with power
 Up the stream of the strongest gale.
 None might choose 'twixt two or four
 Which the lesser or which the more ;
 Wind and sun set equal store
 On each from gill to gilded tail.

But the one St. Peter loved the best
 Was the one that swam the nighest the west :
 He had no signal crown or crest,
 Nor other mark his praise to tell.
 As Saints can see, man sees not yet ;
 We know not how their hearts are set :
 From Heaven St. Peter loosed his net
 And caught the fish he loved most well.

Since then each day through shine and shower
 Three fishes swim on St. Peter's tower :
 Against the gale they swim with power,
 And none of them all is least or best.

The people, looking up from the town,
Point and tell how a wind blew down
The craziest vane from its battlement-crown,
The one that swam the nighest the west.

To every gale with tails at tether
He and his fellows had swum together,
Out of doors in all kinds of weather,
Whatever the wind that God thought best.
His back hath been stroked by the golden key,
He swimmeth now in a crystal sea.
Fish of St. Peter, pray for me—
“Fisherman Peter, find him rest!”

THE DEATH OF ST. CHRISTOPHER.

CHRISTOPHER, who bore our Lord
 On his shoulder through the ford,
 After years (his great reward)
 One glad day lay down to die.
 From his body, limb by limb,
 Labour he put off from him,
 Till he heard a passer-by
 Stand before the ford and cry.

When he heard the summons sound,
 Christopher rose up from ground ;
 Forth he went on duty bound,
 Murmuring : " Lest I work amiss,
 Christ must give me strength for this :
 This my latest labour is !"
 When he reached the ford at length,
 Spake the Voice of all his bliss,
 Saying, " Christ shall give thee strength !"

Humble, bowed, and very faint,
 At His Feet fell down the Saint,
 At His Feet fell down to pray,
 " Lord, I have not strength to-day,

Thou must go some other way !
 These old limbs can lift no more
 That dread weight which once they bore."

In his face the Holy Child
 Looked and smiled ;
 And His Voice grew full and wide,
 Many waters multiplied,
 Saying : " Oh, Christopher, let be !
 Since thou once didst carry Me,
 I am come to carry thee."

Very gently from his knees
 Lifted him the Prince of Peace ;
 Wonderful and Counsellor,
 In His Hands the Saint He bore ;
 He, the everlasting Lord,
 Carried him across the ford.

Underneath, a level road
 All the trodden waters flowed ;
 Not a wave was dispossessed
 That the Heavenly Bearer pressed,
 With the Saint upon His Breast.
 " When," said He, " My weight did hurt,
 Thou My beast of burden wert.
 Now for thee, My child and lamb,
 I the beast of burden am."

THE CITY OF SLEEP.

MANIKIN, maker of dreams,
Came to the city of sleep :
The watch was on guard, and the gates were barred,
And the moat was deep.

“Who is on my side, who ?”
Moonbeams rose in a row :
He tuned them loud betwixt town and cloud ;
But his voice was low.

He sang a song of the moon
For loan of her silver beams ;
Misty and fair, and afloat in air,
Lay the ladder of dreams.

He harped by river and hill ;
And the river forgot to flow,
And the wind in the grass forgot to pass,
And the grass to grow.

For he harped to the heart of earth
Where honey in hive lies sweet :

And that sound leapt through the gates, and crept
Through the silent street.

Manikin, maker of dreams,
He pursed his lips to pipe:
Since truth and lie are for wringing a-wry
When the times are ripe.

He piped at the hearts of men:
And dreamers rose up straight,
To drift unbarred by the drowsy guard,
And beyond the gate.

He piped the dream of the maid:
And her heart was up and away;
And fast it beat and hurried her feet
To the gates of day.

He piped the dream of the mother,
The cry of her babe for food:
And she rose from rest to give it the breast;
And that was good!

He piped the dream of the child:
And into its hands and feet
Came tunes to play of the live-long day;—
And that was sweet!

He piped to the heart of youth :
And the heart of youth had sight
Of love to be won, and a race to run ;
And that was right !

He piped the song of age :
And that was a far-off song,—
When life made waste and the mouth could taste :—
But that was wrong !

Manikin, maker of dreams,
Had piped himself to sleep :
The watch was on guard, and the gates were barred,
And the moat was deep !



II.



AS THE FLOCKS FOR THE BROOKS.

AS the flocks for the brooks,
As the river for the sea,
So mine eyes long for thy looks,
I for thee.

As the sun drinks up the dew,
As the fire burns up the coal,
So Love strikes through and through
To my soul.

My spirit wastes like smoke,
My body burns like fire ;
Denial was but the cloak
To my desire.

Wherefore did strife seem good
Or strength a goal to gain ?
When the fire came to the wood,
All was vain !

Oh, Beloved, if thou get heat
By any pain in me,
Then is the pain most sweet :
Let it be !

Only make this be true,
And plain that I may see :
As the sun draws up the dew
Draw thou me !

When far, feel thou me near !
When heavy of heart, oh, haste :—
Drain me to death, for fear
Lest I waste !

Lest, betwixt lip and lip
Of loves that thirst and cry,
The cup of offering slip,
And I die !

OF LOVE AS A MIRROR.

SHOW me what measure has my love to be,
 That with thy will it may find fellowship!
 Thou, the creator of it, give decree
 Whether it show or hide, stand up or trip :
 Whether thy will is that it run or stay,
 Wax being honoured, or with grieving wane,
 Do as thou biddest it, or disobey,
 Boldly be rich, or waste itself in vain !

So teach it the complexion of its art
 That in thy view it may thy thought reflect,
 And thou—by taking it into thy heart—
 Be only of thyself more circumspect,
 To gather, from the fair true things it shows,
 All those dear parts of thee that my love knows !

OF SELF-LOVE.

SHOW me what self in thee doth disallow
 Lest with weak giving-in thy soul grow slack :
 So will I strengthen what is weakness now,
 It shall be virtue ere 'tis rendered back.
 Ah, could I on myself thy weakness take,
 And with my strength repay it thee again,
 Then thou shouldst gain a heart too strong to break,
 While I on thee might break my heart in vain !

Show, then, what dear self-love might wish for ease,—
 All that thou likest least and likest best ;
 That I for thee may make my toil at these,
 And thou mayst have thy pleasure at thy rest.
 Yet still thou failest when so teaching me :
 Thou canst not love thyself as I love thee !

OF HOLY OBEDIENCE.

DEAR love, but read me right and reckon true
 How love of thee hath featured all my mind ;
 Till in my will 'tis thine that I pursue,
 And in my face thy looks I wish to find.
 For having eyes that worship at thine eyes,
 And senses all to thy clear guidance bent,
 Even as a pool takes colour from the skies
 So from thy grace hath grace to me been lent.

Yea, by this test I in my own love stand,
 And out of mine own self get touch with thee :
 Because my hand hath rested on thy hand
 Therefore is its poor use grown sweet to me ;
 And for my lips, since they thy word obey,
 Them I love too : but in another way.

HOW LOVE PUTS OUT LOVE'S DREAM.

WHEN thou art with me, then my heavy brain
 Puts off its traffic, and resumes its rest ;
And thought, which stood thine absence to sustain,
 Slacks its o'er-laboured head upon thy breast.
For where thou art not fancy fills thy place,
 And mind rears up a monument to thee ;
Since to have tidings of thy distant face
 My brain must ever at such building be.

Then thou dost wrong, sweet love, to draw so near,
 If, coming, thou a second self dost slay ;
For I, at rest with looking on my dear,
 Must let that ghostly other slip away ;
And thou, being with me, hast love's dream undone ;
But, being absent, art increased by one.

OF A CAUSE THAT IS PAST PLEADING.

O LOVE, who know'st my cry and all my prayer,
 Since my deep groaning is not hid from thee,
 Why should my breath so smite the empty air,
 Or words so brand the fire which burns in me ?
 Thou know'st : and be thou cruel, or be thou kind,
 Both ways most bound at thy dear feet I fall :
 For though I have not thee, thou hast my mind,—
 New prayer can give thee naught, nor aught recall.

Oh, be not thou like those who at their ease
 Observant of the player's pains do sit ;
 Or judges savage in their just decrees,
 Who love the prayer, but love not granting it :
 Nor be thou like the gods—would have us cry,
 Demanding more, that they may more deny !

THE BODY'S COMPLAINT OF ITS BURDEN.

MY body as an Atlas bears the weight
 Of that dear Heaven, which I may never see,
 Whose load of love hangs like a load of hate :
 Be it love or hate, blind to it must I be !
 Thus bowed and burdened, am I never free
 To rest mine eyes upon the load I bear ?
 Oh, to thy threshold, where I waste and wear,
 Stoop down but once, my Heaven, and kiss thou me !

Or, if not so, let the plumed feet of Time
 Break up this live-long utterance of my moan,
 And freeze my senses in the death which hangs
 Round sterile beauty all its poisoned fangs ;
 Till from the clasp of this unhappy clime
 My body turns to everlasting stone.

THE SOUL'S COMPLAINT OF LOVE'S
ABSENCE.

STRANGE children in my breast thine absence breeds,
Fierce ghosts of love insatiable as fire,
That break my slumber with their hasty greeds,
And rob my spirit of its clear desire.
And where I would not, there they lead my feet ;
And what I wish not, therewith feast mine eyes ;
Till to make bitter loneliness seem sweet
My thought consents to what my soul denies !

O, dear, pure vision of all love on earth,
Why tarriest thou from me in any land ?
Return and rid me of this monstrous birth :
On my racked senses lay thy healing hand !
For, in my dreams, I give my faith the lie,
And shuddering wake and pray lest this be I !

OF GRIEF WASTED.

LOVE, if my too sad singing hurts thy pleasure,
 Learn how thy too long absence loads my grief!
 For if with words my sorrow I could measure
 I might bring home my love to thy belief.
 But now an alien strange of speech it strayeth,
 And all unwelcome breathes into thine ear
 Its tale of Time, where Time his tread delayeth
 Fast rooted in the absence of my dear.

If by my will I could bid well be doing,
 To win thy pleasure were my pleasure set :
 Like leans to like : yet were I now not suing,
 If love, by grieving, grieving could beget :
 For this would be all Paradise to gain,
 Could I but hear thy heart for mine complain.

OF TIME LOST.

THY will hath worn the travelling face of Time
 And made his little moments seem an age :
 Lest his first promise should fly up to prime,
 Thy silence round his wings becomes a cage.
 For thee his minstrel-sands have ceased to run,
 Nor ever shall he sound his note of noon ;
 Since by the word once given, but straight undone,
 Thy lips have emptied his poor lips of tune.

So hath my love lost Time for thy dear sake,
 While thou hast never yet found Time for me ;
 Time that I wish to give thou wilt not take,
 Nor even to my hopes grant Time to be.
 But thy dear fame, if I might make my verse
 Keep Time with thee, all ages should rehearse.

TO LOVE, THE DESTROYER.

LORD of my harvest, thou hast reaped my earth
 And left it bare of vintage or of grain :
 Wilt thou not ever come and bless my dearth,
 Seeing that for thy sake all my fields lie slain ?
 Oh, cast a little kindness to the land
 That dies of thee : lest, when a year runs by,
 No second harvest spring to meet thy hand,
 And there be nothing left in me to die !

How can I think of thee, nor wish to give ?
 How without thee can giving cast its seed ?
 How without giving can I hope to live,—
 Since giving love is all my soil may breed.
 So sow, that my sad earth its load may keep ;
 And in a new year come again and reap !

OF LOVE'S FREEHOLD.

WHILE I am warm, dear love, thine honours live :
 So long as tongue can build a home for sound
 To fill with thy repute, this will I give
 That men may find thy name on holy ground.
 Since Love, which sent thee hither to be loved,
 Hath here set up his dwelling-place of clay,
 As walls to hold his word my use is proved :
 I do but worship as he bids me say.

So this it is which shows my love its right,
 And, though my want endures, maintains my worth,
 Within this temple to set up thy light,
 And sound thee to the common ears of earth :
 Nor shalt thou lack that praise the gods devise,
 Till in this house of clay Love buried lies.

THE LOVER TO THE BELOVED.

DO you deserve, dear love, that I should love you ?
 Show me to serve, one single thing above you,
 Where I may find
 One truer to my mind :
 And I will leave you straight,
 And seek that other fate !

Oh, Love sets not his claim on best, but nearest !
 So close you came to my request, my dearest,
 So near my need,
 By bitter fate decreed,
 Though you grow slack
 I find no turning back.

Ah, Love, my heart knows beyond all denying,
 Whate'er your will, my will is, living, dying ;
 So, by your will,
 Denial holds me still,
 Lest loving without end
 Too far, I lose my friend !

HOW THE LOVER IS WITHOUT WILL.

LOVE hath my feet so bound,
 Against my will I wait,
 Still on forbidden ground
 Held suppliant to my fate.
 Since thou wouldst have me go,
 Dear love, I would do so ;
 But feet have not :—
 Love roots them to the spot.

When thou hast bid me cease,
 Well would it soothe my heart
 To give thee ease,
 And part !
 But Love both hands and feet
 Hath to his service sweet
 Bound down, I may behave
 But as his slave.

With me be vexed not, dear !
 All that he bids me do,
 I do it with such fear
 And after rue !

Would I might do thy will,—
Leave nothing told ;
And thy content to fill
Let my content go cold !

Alas, thus must I learn
How souls in Hell have eyes !
Here must I burn
With sight of Paradise ;
And touch, with hands unblest,
The holy gates
Which open out their rest
To happier fates.

POWERS OF AIR.

DEATH, with viewless nets, a snare
 Spreads in air, to catch my breath :
 Every time I laugh or sing,
 Through his web a breath breaks wing.
 Then, where that shows torn, he takes
 Other web and mends and makes ;
 Till at last the time he spends
 Bringeth fast his broken ends !

Love his viewless dart, despair,
 Shoots in air to pierce my heart :
 Every once that in my side
 Beats my heart a dart goes wide.
 Still with venom he anoints,
 Each afresh, a hundred points :
 Still with art pursues his feat
 To kill my heart upon its beat !

Breath and heart, at come and go,
 Still combine to meet the foe.
 Yet not long can breath be held,
 Yet not long can heart be whole :

HOW A LITTLE JOY ENDED A GREAT SORROW.

LAST night all sorrow stopped :
 Half unaware
 To hand a love-child dropped,
 And nestled there :
 And there would lie,
 And wanted not to fly !

Not Love Himself ; ah, no !
 The shadowy air
 Saw not that great God show
 His plumage fair :
 Yet one came near
 To be his messenger :

How, after many days,
 (The message saith)
 I, too, shall learn his ways
 And taste his breath :
 So he, to train me now,
 This sending doth allow :—

A momentary child
 Of dusk and dew :
 His fastened lips were mild,
 Small joy he knew.
 Yet, him to take,
 My heart grew like to break.

“ Under this dusk,” I said,
 “ For my desire ”
 (And drew to mine his head)
 “ Glows buried fire !
 Drunk with this dew,
 Great Love, I wait for you.”

Deepened the dusk, and dried
 The dew : and “ Oh ! ”
 Caught fast on sorrow cried
 The child, “ let go !
 My small heart breaks
 If thine such wishing makes ! ”

So, still I lay, oh, still !
 And let him go.
 A shadow of Love’s great will
 Was his to show :
 But on my darkened sight
 He burns like light !

Not Love Himself: ah, no!
 The shadowy air
 Saw not that great God go
 On plumage fair:
 Yet one came near
 To be his messenger.

Thou, who hast given me this,
 Give it a name!
 Too true thy friendship is
 To teach me shame.
 Tell me his name who flew
 Like dusk and dew?

Time shall divide our days
 And part our feet:
 Yet, forth on severed ways,
 When still hours beat,
 He like a light
 Shall burn my darkened sight!

Not Love Himself: ah, no!
 The shadowy air
 Saw not that great God go
 On plumage fair:
 Yet one came near
 To be his messenger.

THE DREAM

IN a fire that flew by night,
 My delight
 Came and murmured over thee,
 "Dream of me, dream of me!"
 In the stillness of thy room
 Sleep took up her magic loom,
 And with threads of slumbering fire
 Wove desire across the gloom :
 Dream of me !

Soft airs of the burning south
 Touched thy mouth ;
 Sweet sounds murmured over thee,
 "Dream of me, dream of me!"
 All her fragrance to disclose,
 At thy casement showered a rose ;
 And a sudden splash of scent
 Loosed into the darkness went,
 On what errand—ah, who knows?—
 Dream of me !

Hand-like, as the touch that stings
 Silver strings,

Even so came sleep on thee :
“Dream of me, dream of me!”
Ah, for sign thine arms lay wide;
Soft thy lips the darkness tried ;
Till the dream, that on thee lit,
Drew me to the midst of it ;—
Drew me wholly to thy side.
Dream of me !

THE ARROW AND THE BOW.

THOU the arrow,
 Fate the bow,
 Though thy beauty
 Lays me low,
 Thou I know
 Art not my foe :
 After thee
 Come rain and snow,
 On my barrow.

Thou the sent
 Of Fate the sender,
 Be content
 I know thee tender :
 Though my heart
 In me be rent,
 Love to thee
 Rent free I render.

Thou, dear swallow,
 Didst out-run
 Hindered summer
 Hidden sun,

Warmth was none
Where clouds lay dun ;
Therefore thou
Didst follow rest
Where for nest
A heart lay hollow.

Thou the arrow,
Fate the cord,
Captives both
Are neither lord :
Here not loath
I room afford ;—
In my breast
The barb can rest,
Where both board
And bed are narrow.

A PRAYER IN AUTUMN.

FLOCKS to the seaward of feathers ; loud winging
of leaves and birds ;

And a roaring wind in the grey of a headlong sky ;
While autumn is hoarding her dead, and harries together
her herds,

Let her not cast me aside : in the waste of the year let
me die !

I have had summer in plenty, too long for the things I
could learn :—

Summer enough for a life, since spring was enough
for the dream !

When I hear the leaves sobbing around me, and wings
on a backward return,

In the eddy and roar of the year, let me go with the
stream !

O Love, when the first leaf unfastened I found you ; you
came.

I grew blind in your gaze, and your lips to my lips
were aglow ;

And your hands and your feet lay upon me like fetters of
flame :—

O Love, now the last leaf unfastens, I lose you, you go !

A PRAYER AGAINST SPRING.

THE year burns low, and the wind runs high,
And withered leaves go whirling by:
So, since the signal sounds, I cry,
Let love come forth from me, and die!

The fair leaves, letting the stripped boughs be,
Drop and drift from the wind-worn tree:
O Love, too fair to belong to me,
Fall from my heart, and set me free!

The sky is heavy with clouds in herds,
With ruinous leaves and bevy of birds;
Earth her breast for the burial girds;
O Love, be loving with farewell words.

And going, for pity on kind days slain,
Close fast the doors upon all my pain,
Lest sorrow, and loss, and life be vain:
And spring come back: and I love again!

LOVE DEAD AND RAISED.

LOVE in my soul had digged himself a pit:
 "Here must my burial be!" he spake, and sighed,
 And half-dead echoes of the place replied,
 "Lie down and die, here of past pain be quit."
 So in the dark lay Love, and silence knit
 Kind healing fingers to the wounds left wide:
 And slowly at each gap the spilled blood dried:
 But, for His death, I found no grief in it.

There as Love lay by death, our peace grew old,
 Life was too far a thing to look upon,
 And all our anguish was a tale long told;
 Till light rolled back the stone and morning shone:
 Lo, there lay linen garments fold on fold
 Over an empty tomb, whence Love was gone.

THE NAMING OF LOVE.

WHERE I lie wounded, if you came,
 Belovèd of the hidden name,
 And touched my wounds and healèd me,
 And vanished, would not Christ's name be,
 The name to know you by—for me ?

Oh, my belovèd, if I loose
 All prayer in words for the dear use
 Of such name-giving : fashion high
 All that you were to name you by ;
 My tale thereof would seem a lie.

But let again your kind lips move
 With music of the mind I love :
 Then, though I hear not what they do
 In syllables, they show forth you ;
 There I behold you through and through !

Since ere they tasted death and night
 Your lips once spake for my delight,
 Their sound now draws me, and your face
 Bends out of darkness to the embrace
 Of arms where heaven has dwelt a space.

III.



CUPID AND CHRIST.

QUICK came Cupid near to Christ,
 At His Feet laid down his bow :
 "See, Thy Love hath all sufficed !
 Burning in its heat and glow
 Mortal hearts grow fired and iced :
 Blunted, now, my weapons show.
 Take my arrows, let me go !
 Vainly now were hearts enticed."
 Christ said, "No !

"Take thine arrows, take them up !
 From My Feet take up thy bow !
 All that thou hast doffed, now dup !
 Little will My people know,
 How My Love hath drained their cup,
 Shoot thine arrows, let them go !
 On the hearts I cherish so,
 Thou mayst yet break fast and sup."
 Cried Cupid, "No !"

"Ah !" spake Christ, "and shall their shame
 Shorten-in thy little day ?
 While I wait, 'tis all the same :
 If they yet can make thee gay

Have thy pleasure, play thy game !
Little wounds shall lead the way
Where, at last, My Wounds may stay :
Flickering sparks may kindle flame.
Run, and play !”

Cupid, as the Other bade,
Took his arrows back, and played.
Every arrow that he sends
Mars a heart the Other mends !
But, ere forth upon that raid,
Once his heart to Christ's he laid,
Murmuring yet half-afraid,—
“ After, when the playing ends,
When grow well the wounds I've made,
We'll be friends ? ”

CHRIST AND DEATH.

CHRIST to Death's door came and knocked :
While the door three hours stayed locked,
Every passer turned and mocked
Him that patient chose to stay,
Waiting there on Death's delay.

At that door His Feet He stayed :
There to beat His Heart He laid ;
Whom to meet made Death afraid,
That of Life could never want
A more kingly suppliant.

Three long hours had Love to try
Entrance Death would yet deny,
Dreading still to have Him die.
Only men with careless breath
Doomed the Lord of Life to death.

THE NEW ORPHEUS.

ORPHEUS once with touching keys
 Drew the rivers and the seas,
 Beasts and birds ; and all of these
 Heard the sweetness of his breath.
 Round him drawn to drowsy ease,
 Snakes, those hooded monks of death,
 Gleaned a pagan Shibboleth,
 That alone through music can
 All the ranks of nature span.

Spell-bound all they heard him then ;
 Each, a soul in fleshly pen,
 Filled with lusts or filled with fears,
 Opened quick prophetic ears.
 Over the dull minds of men
 Shot the eagle's kingly ken ;
 Straight the lion loosed his lust,
 And the red-deer leaned in trust
 Up against the tawny side :
 And the peacock lowered his pride,
 And the serpent left the dust.

Orpheus, singing, showed to these
 Wider worlds and fairer seas,
 Earth, between whose fruitful knees
 All life fed and flowered, as trees
 Feed and flower in sun and air :
 Plenty so stood everywhere.

Soon the singer's song was done :
 Earth, in anguish for her son,
 Saw the reddened river run :
 Where the faint and bleeding head,
 Echoing its music fled,
 Down the stream to darkness hurled
 Half the wisdom of the world.

Yet, to cover that high crime,
 Orpheus came a second time.
 Nothing in his hand bore he,
 Save the imprint plain to see
 Of a starry mystery,
 Straining out of thick-set wings,
 Lending threads of fire for strings;
 Till it seemed to be a lyre
 Stretched to earth from heavenly things,

When St. Francis touched the chord,
 Forth the hidden music poured
 All the praises of its Lord,

And the rumour grew so sweet,
 Birds and beasts were at his feet.
 In their breasts a far-off tale
 Of old Orpheus did prevail:
 And they cried, no more dejected,
 "Our Messiah, the long expected,
 Cometh now with wisdom meet
 In our midst to find his seat."

So the second Orpheus spake
 Little things for Love's great sake.
 Sweetness of that uttered word
 All the beasts, but no man, heard.
 Father Francis, grant me bliss
 In my darkness, if it is
 Possible to tell of this!

"Little brothers" (did you say?)
 "Yours must be the later day,—
 Not so very far away.
 Ye, that have more feet than wit,
 Shall not lag because of it.
 Thou, man's minister of speed,
 Doubt not thou dost fit God's need:
 So, by Him decreed, thy course
 Trains thee to be Israel's horse.
 Once on earth a prophet's eyes
 Saw a chariot mount the skies;

And before each burning tyre
 Horses sprang like flames of fire.
 Doubt not that to wait God's need
 Still in heavenly stall they feed,
 Ministers to His desire.

“Come meek ass, and hear me tell ;
 Surely Christ with thee doth dwell !
 Thou, on whom He once would sit,
 Bear'st His cross because of it.
 At the entry of that town,
 Where men threw palm-branches down,
 Thou wast bearing Death and Myrrh,
 O thou little Christopher !
 Not upon thy forehead yet
 May His blessed sign be set ;
 So, while wisdom in thee lack,
 Light His yoke upon thy back.

“Little birds, whose tongues and wings
 Seem so full of heavenly things,
 Do not doubt that song and flight
 Are most pleasing in His sight.
 When the Spirit showed to men
 Bird-like came the vision then :
 Would He cast the form of dove
 Round His glory without love ?

"Deep the ways of Love, and high
 Ever, when God's Finger wrote
 Word for man, dumb beast stood by.
 With His people's sins the goat
 To the desert crept to die :
 When blind wrath in Balaam smote,
 Smitten beast had clearer eye
 To behold bright heavenly things—
 Sword made bare and barrier wings.
 Sheep, with shepherds watching nigh,
 Heard the high Angelic note ;
 Near the crib an ox stood by ;
 And a dove, when ark did float,
 Symbol bore by olive-branch
 God would yet the waters staunch.

"Listen, last, what shape of guest
 In the everlasting skies
 Standeth high among the blest
 Where God's kingdom has to be :
 Beasts whose wings are full of eyes
 Gather there and bow the knee :
 None is greatest, none is least,
 All the Light of Godhead see.
 One is like a flying bird,
 One is like a beast of prey,
 After these there comes a third

Like an ox that eateth hay ;
 And with these, behold, a man
 Equal : none divide them can :
 None is greater there than they.

“ When the world lay drowned in sin,
 When the Heavens with wrath were dark,
 And all creatures entered in
 At God’s bidding to the ark ;
 That same ark was but the sign
 Of a fold yet more divine
 Where the Shepherd’s Face shall shine :
 Where His Arms shall draw to rest
 Sheep and goats against His Breast,
 Where your heads will lie by mine.”

Love Eternal, if Thou didst
 Bid a child be in our midst
 To declare the heavenly way :
 Then was not Saint Francis he ?
 And must not his wisdom be
 Truest truth, and brightest day ?
 Therefore, Francis, pray for me !
 And, to pay my debt to thee,
 Ever when I bow the knee
 I for bird and beast will pray.

SAINT AND SINNER.

UNKNOWN Saint, whoe'er thou be,
 Vigilant in prayer for me,
 God have pity on thy prayer,
 Lest in vain
 Thou dost drain celestial air !

“ Nay, no indrawn breath can taste
 This pure air to give forth waste.
 Therefore, if for thee I pray,
 Some far day
 God shall let me have my way.

“ On these harvest-fields of praise,
 Bowing down at God's great gaze,
 In the wheat can there be tares ?
 Are His Feet
 Bound about by withered prayers ? ”

Ah, for what past sin of thine
 Hast thou made a prayer of mine ?
 What I may to-morrow do
 Thou a thousand years must rue :

In His sight, who sees, must say—
“ Christ, I did it yesterday!”

“ Then shall speak the Often-slain,
‘ Yesterday I bore the pain
All at once for him and thee :
Call, and bid him come to Me ! ’ ”

So thou prayest for me yet !
 And for thee
 I will pray, lest utterly
I be lost—if thou forget !

BONDS.

AS a stream that runs to sea
 Ever by its banks is led,
 And by windings shepherded ;
 So in bonds though bound I be,
 I through limits reach to Thee.

These dear bonds wherein I chafe,
 Wishing, " Would that I were free !"
 These it is which hold me safe,
 Bringing me at last to Thee
 As the stream is brought to sea.

Penning it from side to side,
 Shepherding its little streams,
 Every bank a barrier seems :
 Yet the stream would soon be dried
 If the channel were too wide.

Here, fast bound by bank and fence
 Where I have not space to spread
 Still my body, chafed by sense,
 Feels a spirit cross its bed,
 As a stream goes current-led.

Human minds so move about,
Only if fenced round with doubt ;
Only if denied their grasp
Gain the everlasting clasp.
Only streams which fettered be
Fret their way at last to sea.

So, with limits for my guide,
Safe, I shall not wander wide ;
But, where we are meant to meet,
Find in Thee the Life denied :
Falling low shall kiss Thy Feet,
Reaching far shall touch Thy Side.

LITTLE DEATH.

OH, Death, at thee I may afford to laugh,
 Who, thinking to take all, canst have but half.
 Thou, old mortality, art but a mole;
 Blind burrowing here thou canst not hurt my soul.
 More than thou askest, lightly would I do :
 Bid me one mile with thee ; I will go two !
 Or, wouldst thou have this cloak I wear as mask,
 Then take my coat as well, before thou ask ;
 And if to smite me shamefaced thou dost seek,
 Strike with an equal shame the other cheek.
 Hale me to prison, whence I may not budge
 Till debt be paid : yet thou art not my Judge ;
 There is too much in me has yet to die,—
 Would thou couldst keep it from His awful Eye.
 But if, being dead, I could not feel His Breath,
 I should have entered into second death.
 Let Death his sentence deeply root in me,
 Yet One shall root it out with pardon free :
 If I be dust my God will send His rain,
 And make it fit to bring forth fruit again :
 Or if foul mud, He shall make shine His sun,
 Till all impurity from me be run.
 Welcome thou art, poor Death, with me to dwell,
 Lodge where thou canst awhile, then fare thee well !

IV.





THE LAST LAUGH.

(On a child playing by the sea-shore.)

SHELLS at sixes and sevens,
 What had you there, little son ?
 A glimpse of the under-heavens,
 When the work of the world is done,
 When Time shall have loosed from their courses
 The stars and the moon and sun.

When, with a wearied gesture,
 Earth to be loosed of spells,
 Casts as an outworn vesture
 Her woods and her hills and dells ;
 And sounds are as ghosts in the silence,
 Or whisper of waves in shells.

Life and its tragic actors
 Quit of their masks of mirth :
 Death on his old detractors
 Dancing for all he's worth :
 What a harlequinade of laughter
 Shall tickle the ribs of earth !

The clouds will gather their thunder,
 But never a face grow pale ;
 The storms will behold in wonder
 High seas, but without a sail ;
 And never a ship go under
 At the call of the strongest gale.

Though Etna to ease his belly
 May open his mouth and spit,
 Or boil the seas to a jelly
 With never a fish in it ;—
 As a child where a shore lies shelly
 Old Death at his shards will sit.

Then, in a whole world emptied,
 With nothing to lose or win,
 With nowhere a heart to be tempted
 And nowhere a sin to sin,
 Will a god's face not grow foolish,
 And will not a fiend's grow thin ?

For broken are roof-tree and rafter ;
 And prayer is gone forth like smoke,
 And praise, which the gods came after,
 Like cloud at a strong wind's stroke ;
 And the tombs may be shaken with laughter,
 But none can enjoy the joke.

THE RETURN OF THE NATIVE.

THE ghost came back when frost lay cold
 Across his father's farm ;
 And stayed where huddled flocks kept fold,
 His crook upon his arm.

He in the moonlight looked at peace,
 And piped a pastoral tune :
 He seemed a shepherd of the fleece
 That drifts across the moon.

He sang, " Full many moors away
 Lie other flocks in fold ;
 And there to guard them night and day
 There hangs a body cold.

" There through the fleeces all the night,
 Hard push the heavy rams :
 And there, when winter downs are white
 The ewes put forth their lambs.

" Yet little kens a body cold
 How, at his father's farm,
 Long nights he used to watch the fold,
 His crook upon his arm.

"I pipe the songs he piped of yore,
I watch the homely light :
The native at his father's door
Comes not indoors to-night."

All night he watched upon the croft
Until the breath of day :
Then heaved his shepherd's crook aloft,
And sighed himself away.

THE RETURN OF THE BELOVED.

OUT of the heart of night a hand
 Of darkness touched my side ;
 Light of my life, I saw you stand,
 And dreamed you had not died.

“ Oh, you look weary, you look old,
 And heavy hangs your head ;
 Come from the night and from the cold,
 And creep into my bed.”

The fates that leagued against us still
 Had fallen away in fear,
 When warm within your living will
 You sought to draw me near.

But my quick soul with hard denial
 Smote on its doors in pain ;
 “ Go back,” it cried, “ Beloved, awhile ;
 And die, and come again ! ”

Nay ! for the bargain that we drave,
 Thou bitter soul, lie still !
 Such comfort from the kindly grave
 Had done my dear no ill !

HIC JACET.

KINDLING far ahead of day
All the fields lay yellow :
Morning eyes looked back to say,
“Life’s a winsome fellow !”

She rose up, oh, she rose up ;
Softly came she to him,
Bit his bread and drained his cup :
In a while she knew him.

She lay down, oh, she lay down,
Drooped like a tired starling :
“Shut the doors of all the town !
Death’s the dearer darling !”

Said Death to Life, a little loath,
“I take, since you bequeath her !”
Here she lies who loved them both :
She, the loved of neither !

THE RED FIELD.

IN the field my lover found me,
Who dared not be his bride ;
There with the corn-stems round me
I lay down at his side.

In the field my brother slew me,
To shield our father's pride
From the shame that had gone through me,
And the babe within my side.

In the field my lover slew him,
Before my blood had dried :
Then with his own sword to him,
Self-slain my lover died.

Think of us, all folks, kindly
Here, where we all abide !
We are friendly who loved so blindly,
Now we lie side by side.

THE MAN IN POSSESSION.

THROUGH all the long-deserted house
 Moves nothing but the furtive mouse ;
And at the outer casement, hark !
The wind that does not fear the dark .

Down wind, down rain, down leaves, down heart !
Here fear and I can never part :
Though all the year 's an emptying town,
My sorrow never shall lie down.

Here sit we silent, eye to eye,
Waiting to see each other die ;
Opposing wills to hide or seek
Which be the stronger, which the weak.

Oh, wind, thou doest thy work alone !
Thou hast no cause to cry or moan.
Here I, till doomsday tolls its note,
Sit holding terror by the throat !

With nothing else to do, I wait
The onward coming of my fate :
When every straining sinew slips,
And terror has me on the lips.

A. GARDEN ENCLOSED.

DEEP in this garden, closely fenced
 And wardered by a myriad eyes,
 A world from time and space condensed
 Feast for the weary idler lies.

Here at his earth-works plain to see
 Laborious toils the Roman ant ;
 Greek-like, the honey-laden bee
 Mellifluous hangs from plant to plant.

The wary spider sports his thread
 And devil-like receives his toll ;
 And underground with buried head
 Grubs old mortality the mole.

Here wisdom waits the idler's look :
 The mind is free to roam or halt ;
 The garden is my history book,
 Its walls are my ancestral vault.

A book with fair devices strawed,
Lavish in rosemary and sage ;
Where all the margin-paths run broad
Around the decorative page.

Or, open to the skies, a vault
Where basking sunnily I lie ;
And there, forgetting life's a fault,
With foot in earth prepare to die.

THE OPEN GRAVE.

FAREWELL now, Life, and kiss thou me !
And if men ask thee how I died,
Say that I went with ill-content
And backward looks from thy dear side.

And if they, coming near my tomb,
Shall listen, and shall fail to hear
Me sobbing in that narrow room ;
It is because I am not there.

But to the wind this breath that goes,—
There hearkening thou shalt hear me sound :
And count my dust wherever blows
The restless dust along the ground.

Since here I lived, where can I die ?
A breath to dust that will not burn,
My ghost in every wind goes by,
And in my grave I turn and turn !

It is the dead that keep life warm :

For, underneath the hills and rocks,
Dead lovers fill the ground with storm,
And drive the roaring equinox.

Oh, doubt not that the doom which gave,

To earth her portion never said
The dust should sleep ! Where is the grave
So deep as to contain its dead ?

ADVOCATUS DIABOLI.

YOU are the Saint ; the sinner I ;
 Now both of us come here to die.
 You did the right, and I the wrong,
 I was the weak, and you the strong;
 Yet, at our two extremes, we doff
 Not much with this our taking off :
 Diversely we learn not to grieve
 For relics of the life we leave.
 If distaste for the world were all
 Man need acquire,—I, in my fall,
 Have found as good a way to learn
 As you the vanities you spurn.
 I have gone through, with mother wit,
 And tested all the cheats of it:
 You gave your judgment at hearsay,
 And passed by on the other way ;
 Forgetting, giving God His due,
 You owed the Devil some duty too :—
 A mere endeavour to be first
 Exact about the thing you cursed !
 With a too hungry ear you gleaned
 God's ipse dixit on the fiend,

And cursed with sanctimonious awe
 The features which *you* never saw.
 Horns, hoofs, a tail, wings like a bat,—
 Ex parte statements such as that,
 Are fit description, you aver,
 For bright down-fallen Lucifer!
 Yet *I* might tell you other things
 Of the far shadowing of his wings:
 Light's a strong thing, yet darkness is
 The nature of the Infinities.
 Maybe light conquers where it pries,—
 But, where it cannot, darkness lies:
 And if God is the Truth, the Light,
 Satan is yet the Truth, the Night!

You are the strong, and I the weak,
 Yet both have gained the strength we seek:
 Our Gods have brought us to this hour
 To frustrate the resisting power:—
 You, to reject the power of Hell,
 I, to reject your Godhead. Well,
 I am the weak, you are the strong:—
 Unto my weakness doth belong
 Its victory, its power to do
 All that your strength has done for you.
 Whence learn, of Those where we belong,
 Which is the weaker, which the strong!
 I, the inert one, gravitate
 Toward the greater bulk and weight,

While you toil up on troubled wings
 To the minority of things !
 Yet I would say—lest it appear
 I wish to cast at you the sneer
 You cast toward the horns and hoof,—
 Minority is no disproof.
 You cast it in the teeth of sin,
 Heaven's big Reserves are bound to win :
 And he laughs best, so people say,
 Who laughs the latest in the day.
 You seek life : think you, life is good,
 The Tree of Knowledge fit for food ?
 Then should you surely be content,
 Since life is God's experiment,
 Showing him flattery by competing,
 To prove the pudding in the eating !
 But "Oh," you say, "the thing's gone wrong !"
 So there, the Devil proves too strong !
 Was he not right, who held in scorn
 The feast God set, to thrust his thorn
 Into the sides of them that taste,
 Bidding them from the banquet haste
 For refuge under his large wings
 From this conditional state of things ?
 Conditional made absolute,
 Might you not relish fleshly fruit,
 And gladly let your senses loose
 To one long luscious draught of juice :

Considering *that* a Heavenly state,
 Where appetites perpetuate ?
 You aim at Heaven for goal and prize :
 Yet it is out of hoodwinked eyes :
 Blinkered you watch life's transient hour
 Of withering leaf and falling flower,
 Where fagged-out vices prowl and perch,
 Jackals and vultures to the church !

The secret is, as I suspect,
 Life's to attain, or to reject.
 I taste, and say, upon the whole
 I do not wish to have a soul.
 You do not taste: yet take for text
 "To be continued in our next!"

A PRAYER TO DEATH.

DEATH, have thou pity on us all,
 Leave us not lingering when we call !
 Before thee we make haste to fall,
 For all our lives are in thy thrall,
 Death !

No man so fleet of foot may be,
 But each step draws him on to thee :
 Never so stricken and blind are we,
 But at the last we come to see
 Death.

The shaken doors of birth divide,
 And, driven from its mother's side,
 The suppliant life leaps out to hide ;
 Shuddering to find itself denied
 Death.

Thou our first parents didst inspire,
 Who, facing the Eternal ire,
 Drew down to earth forbidden fire,
 And, tasting, had at their desire
 Death.



Thy servant Samson shook the gates
Of towns, slew armies, drew dead weights
Of thunder o'er a thousand fates,
To fashion from his loves and hates
Death !

Noah watched when all the world lay flat,
A watery waste to wonder at :
Throned upon floods of death he sat,
Yet wrecked himself on Ararat,
Death !

O Thou, our father ere we came
To being, hallowed be Thy name,
Thy kingdom bring, thy will proclaim,
Till heaven and earth perform the same,
Death!

Give us each day our daily bread ;—
Give us the sins wherein we shed
Our strength, till weakness in us spread,
And we be lying in one bed :
Death !

From life that tempts not, do thou lead !
Out of its evils hold us freed ;
For comfort of our dying need,
In our sad bodies sow thy seed,
Death !

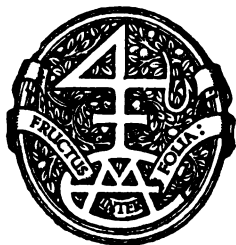
O, Thou, for whom in earth and star
Kingdom, and power, and glory are,
Make perfect soon the clay we mar ;
And from fresh quickening keep us far,
Death !

Several of these poems have appeared in "The Outlook," "The Dome," "The Pall Mall Gazette," "The Speaker," "The Windmill," and "The New York Independent." To the Editors of these papers acknowledgment is due.

4



CHISWICK PRESS:—CHARLES WHITTINGHAM AND CO.
TOOKS COURT, CHANCERY LANE, LONDON.



LONDON
SOLD BY
ELKIN MATHEWS, CORK STREET

